

MICHIGAN RESPIRATORY THERAPIST PROFESSIONAL LICENSING GUIDE

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at things that you, as a foreign-educated respiratory therapist must do to become eligible for a respiratory therapist license in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some additional information about the respiratory therapy field to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATION OF RESPIRATORY CARE IN MICHIGAN

As a respiratory therapist, you must be licensed to practice respiratory therapy in the State of Michigan. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) regulates the profession. They give Michigan licenses to first time licensees and to respiratory therapists who are eligible to practice in other states (by endorsement).

The National Board for Respiratory Care's (NBRC) Certified Respiratory Therapy (CRT) and Registered Respiratory Therapy (RRT) credential examinations are the qualifying examinations for a Michigan respiratory therapy license. However, this is one step in a longer process of education and examination that international respiratory therapists must complete to practice in the state.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

This section explains important steps that you need to complete before you can be licensed to practice respiratory therapy in Michigan. The steps to licensing are as follows:

I. FOREIGN DEGREE EVALUATION AND TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS

In order to be eligible to take the examination that is required to become licensed, you must hold a degree in respiratory therapy from an educational program that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (COARC). Your first step towards becoming a respiratory therapist is to obtain a course by course evaluation of your foreign credentials.

Respiratory Therapy degrees obtained from a foreign college or university do not automatically satisfy the educational requirements for taking the licensing examination. You must contact a COARC-accredited respiratory therapy educational program to determine if that school is willing to award transfer credits to you. The list of COARC-accredited schools can be found at www.coarc.com/36.html. You may want to check with more than one program to see which one can best work with you. The decision-making process and steps you need to take regarding acceptance of international credits or degrees will be defined by each COARC-accredited respiratory therapy program. You can search for accredited programs in Michigan or in any other state. You may be required to complete additional coursework to meet degree requirements at the COARC-accredited educational program.

Transferability of credits depends on several different factors, including accreditation of the program you attended, curriculum compatibility, and grades. You must be awarded a minimum of an associate's degree through either course work or an equivalency evaluation from an entry-level respiratory therapy educational program in order to be eligible to take the Therapists Multiple-Choice Examination (TMC) that is offered by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC). You will need to provide NBRC with either transcripts or an official, sealed letter verifying the equivalence of your degree from the COARC-accredited school in order to be made eligible for the licensing examination.

Fee: \$85

II. NBRC LICENSING EXAMINATION

You will be required to pass either the CRT or RRT Credential required examinations that are offered by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) in order to obtain a respiratory therapist license in Michigan. The test format and content are described in the next topic.

III. APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION

Michigan has a detailed application package available online at www.michigan.gov/healthlicense. To apply for your respiratory therapy license with the Michigan Board of Respiratory Care you must:

1. Submit the Licensure by Examination application that can be downloaded from the Respiratory Therapy page at www.michigan.gov/healthlicense along with the application fee to the Michigan Board of Respiratory Care.

Fee: \$95

2. Be fingerprinted specifically for the Michigan Board of Respiratory Care. Directions for completing the fingerprint requirement are mailed from the Department upon receipt of your application.

Fee: Typically \$60-\$70

3. Arrange to have the passing score report from either the NBRC CRT or RRT credential examinations as well as your credentialing status sent to the Michigan Board directly from NBRC. The website for NBRC is www.nbrc.org.
4. Arrange to have verification of your registration, certification, or license sent to the Michigan Board from your country, whether it is current or expired.
5. Arrange for an official evaluation of your respiratory therapy education from a credentialing evaluation service or the official evaluation used to grant you credit at the COARC-accredited school to be sent directly to the Michigan Board. If you have received a degree or completed additional coursework at a COARC-accredited respiratory therapy educational program, final transcripts should also be sent directly to the Board from the school.

3. TESTS

NATIONAL BOARD FOR RESPIRATORY CARE (NBRC) EXAMINATIONS

The NBRC offers two examinations that are each acceptable for licensure purposes, the CRT Certification exam now called the Therapist Multiple-Choice Examination (TMC) and the Registry Examination for Advanced Respiratory Therapists (RRT). Full information about both examinations, including the examination application, is available on the NBRC website at www.nbrc.org. The application processes for both examinations are very similar.

I. Therapist Multiple-Choice Examination (TMC) for CRT credentials

The 3-hour test consists of 160 multiple-choice questions broken into 3 basic content areas:

- Patient Data Evaluation and Recommendations
- Troubleshooting and Quality Control of Equipment and Infection Control
- Initiation and Modification of Interventions

2016 Fee: \$190

II. Clinical Simulation Examination (CME) for RRT credentials

You must receive a higher cut score on the TMC to be eligible to take the CME. The CME is a 4-hour test of 22 problems in a simulated clinical setting.

2016 Fee: \$200

4. TIME AND COSTS

Evaluating your foreign degree and achieving licensure successfully as a respiratory therapist in Michigan depends on many factors including:

- The completeness of your education and a qualifying degree program
- The efficiency of your registrar and program director in compiling and transmitting your educational records to a COARC-accredited educational program
- Your ability to take any additional coursework necessary at a COARC-accredited program
- Your performance on the NBRC TMC Examination

We provide two hypothetical scenarios to show some of the variety of results that immigrant professionals may find when they seek to become respiratory therapists in Michigan. Please consider these scenarios as two examples out of many possibilities. Your experience will vary.

TWO HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS FOR LICENSING:

Step	More Efficient Scenario <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i>	Less Efficient Scenario <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i>
1. Educational Evaluation for COARC accredited program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of your foreign degree qualifies you immediately for the NBRC TMC Examination. Your foreign credentials are well-organized and in English. You complete all COARC program requirements, including degree evaluation and are made eligible for the examination in 1 year.• \$700 + 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems with your documents take a year to resolve and are expensive since you must pay others in your country to visit your educational institution for you.• Your documents must be translated.• You must complete additional coursework at a COARC-accredited program• \$4,000 + 2 years
2. NBRC-TMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You apply online for the NBRC TMC examination immediately after receiving credit from a COARC-accredited program• You pass the examination on your first attempt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You wait 6 months to apply for the NBRC TMC exam• You pass the examination on your second attempt

Step	More Efficient Scenario Approximate Time and Cost	Less Efficient Scenario Approximate Time and Cost
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$190 and 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$340 and 1 year
3. License Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You submit an application for a Michigan respiratory therapy license (\$95) • You complete the fingerprinting process within a week of applying for the license (\$65) • Your Michigan Respiratory Therapy license is issued • \$160 and 2 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You submit an application for a Michigan Respiratory Therapy license (\$95) • It takes you 2 months to complete the fingerprinting process (\$65) • Due to delay in fingerprinting, it takes 3 months to issue your Michigan Respiratory Therapy license • \$160 and 5 months
	More Efficient Total About \$1,050 and 17 months	Less Efficient Total About \$4,500 and 3 ½ years

5. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level healthcare job in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of becoming licensed as a respiratory therapist.

Meeting the educational requirements and preparing for the CRT Credential examination can take time. Working in healthcare in a different way and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages, such as:

- Employers helping to pay for fees associated with credentialing, testing, and licensing
- More energy to focus on studying
- A chance to adapt to the US healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

If you choose any of these positions as a step towards licensing, be sure to explain your long-term plans to your employer. You may find that some employers offer benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that can support your goals.

RESPIRATORY THERAPY AIDE

Respiratory Therapy Aides are not licensed in Michigan, typically have a high school education, and work under the supervision of a licensed respiratory therapist. They assist patients, prepare materials, assemble equipment, and handle many clerical tasks.

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

6. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Your Michigan Respiratory Therapy License must be renewed every two years through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing on behalf of the Michigan Board of Respiratory Care. Your license will expire on December 31. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department on behalf of the Michigan Board of Respiratory Care. You must renew online. The cost to renew on time is \$150. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to December 31. Be careful: if you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan grants licensing to respiratory therapists through Examination (the process described in this topic), or by Endorsement. A respiratory therapist licensed in another state, who wants to practice in Michigan, must independently meet all Michigan requirements for licensing. If you become licensed in Michigan and want to practice respiratory therapy in another state, you will need to research the legal requirements for that state.

7. IMPORTANT LINKS

LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The [Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs \(LARA\)](#) issues licenses for respiratory therapists. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.
- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/healthlicense. The page that specifically concerns respiratory care is http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-35299_63294_27529_29413---,00.html and it includes information regarding the boards, applications, and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909
- Telephone Number 517-373-8068; Fax: 517-335-2044 Email: BPLHelp@michigan.gov
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions for can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>;
- The administrative rules governing respiratory therapy practice in Michigan can be located at: http://www7.dleg.state.mi.us/orr/Files/AdminCode/987_2011-034LR_AdminCode.pdf

COARC-ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- A list of the educational programs that are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (COARC) is available at www.coarc.com/36.html.

TESTING:

- Information and the application for the NBRC CRT Examination. www.nbrc.org
- Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) administers the NBRC CRT Examination. <http://online.goamp.com/CandidateHome/candidateInformation.aspx>